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**DOMESTIC ASSAULT LEADS TO TWELVE-YEAR SENTENCE FOR FEDERAL
FIREARM AND AMMUNITION OFFENSES**

GRAND RAPIDS, Michigan – Christopher Scott Atkinson, age 46, of Muskegon, Michigan, was sentenced to twelve years (144 months) in prison following his conviction for firearm and ammunition charges relating to a domestic assault. Atkinson was charged in a two-count indictment. Count 1 charged him with being a felon in possession of a firearm, and Count 2 charged him with being a felon in possession of ammunition. The maximum penalty for each count is ten years' imprisonment. The Court reached the twelve-year sentence by ordering that Atkinson serve 120 months on Count 1 and 24 months on Count 2, the latter sentence to be served consecutively, or in addition to, the sentence on Count 1.

Atkinson was convicted of both counts in the indictment on June 27, 2007, following a three-day jury trial.

This case arose from a report of an assault on September 25, 2004. The Muskegon Police Department received two 911 telephone calls at a few minutes before midnight on that date, reporting that a man had struck a woman in the 1800 block of McIlwraith Street in Muskegon,

Michigan. During the assault, Atkinson struck his then-girlfriend with a revolver, and he broke out the window of her friend's car, threatening to shoot each of them. Muskegon police officers later found Atkinson's car parked around the corner from where the assault had taken place. There was human blood on the door frame of the car, and the car contained a bloody paper towel, a pair of binoculars, and three rounds of .38 caliber ammunition. Subsequent investigation led the officers to Atkinson's home. The home was eventually searched, pursuant to a search warrant. During the search, the officers found various types of ammunition, a loaded .38 caliber Smith & Wesson revolver and two knives. Blood was found on two of the bullets inside the chamber of the revolver. This blood was analyzed for DNA, with a positive match to Atkinson.

Atkinson had previously incurred a number of state felony convictions dating back to the early 1980s, including two separate Armed Robbery convictions, two separate Felony Firearm convictions and a Receiving and Concealing Stolen property conviction for which he qualified for enhanced sentencing as a Habitual Offender under state law. He was released from state prison on July 1, 2004, approximately three months before committing the assault that led to his instant conviction.

The investigation was a coordinated effort of the Muskegon Police Department, the Michigan State Police, and the bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF). The case was prosecuted under the Department of Justice's Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative, which is designed to reduce violent crime by targeting violent felons for federal prosecution for firearms violations, which carry stiff penalties.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Phillip J. Green and Ryan D. Cobb.

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